


از الذين عند الله الاسلام



The Muslim Sunrise

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THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

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EDITORIAL

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPIRITUAL VALUES

As the world of our times continues to become more and more deeply plagued with the baffling problems of social injustices and economic inequities, it is being increasingly realized that their true solution lies in the acceptance and performance of spiritual values. Religious leaders are gradually coming to the conclusion that the social, economic and political ills of the contemporary society cannot be remedied without first building the moral and spiritual precepts.

This was the keynote message of the incoming Chairman of the Christian Science Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting of members of the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, held in June 1980 in Boston. Chairperson Mrs. Jean Stark Hebenstreit remarked:

"What we seek is greater spiritual illumination that will enable us to help mankind find the way out of the fear, confusion and conflict which seem to have engulfed the world."⁽¹⁾ In a gathering of more than 7,000 Christian Scientists from some 23 countries, the new chairperson's principal theme was her statement that 'The major crises facing humanity today are not essentially political, economic, or social. They are essentially of moral and spiritual nature.

This is a welcome message much needed for the present day world overwhelmed and captivated by materialism.

Footnotes:

1. The Christian Science Monitor, June 3, 1980

This was the message given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad fourteen hundred years ago. Throughout the centuries, the Holy Quran, the scripture of Islam, has continued to proclaim that our real relationship is with God alone. Nothing is, and should be, closer to us than God; for all things are His gifts and He alone is the Donor. Islam teaches that all beneficence flows from Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all universes. If mankind will place His love above everything else and follow His commands, the economic and social problems are bound to wither away.

The Holy Quran says:

"Say, O Prophet: If your parents, and your children, and your brethren, and your wives, and your husbands, and your kinsfolk, and your property which you have acquired with labor, and the trade the dullness of which you fear, and your homes which you love, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and your striving in the path of Allah to gain His pleasure, you have no faith in Allah. Then wait till Allah issues a decree concerning you, and Allah does not guide the transgressors." (9:24)

Islam requires man to love God with a love greater and deeper than that bestowed on earthly objects of affection. He is the fountain-head of all life and the center of all hope. If a sincere believer can truly establish the relationship of God above everything else, then the greed and fascination of all things material will lose all significance. Those who are true believers remember that all bounties come from Him

Of course, it does not mean that Islam teaches a complete disregard of material means. The Holy Quran repeatedly states that God has created all things in the

world for the use and benefit of man. However, if the relationship with God was placed above everything else then man will learn to share all of His bounties with fellow-beings. Belief in Allah as the sustainer of all will naturally lead to the resolution of all social inequities.

It is a source of gratification for the Muslims that the teachings of Islam in regards to the spiritual values are receiving support from leaders of other religions. As Mr. Saville R. Davis, the newly named President of the Christian Science Church observed in this annual meeting:

'It is our privilege to look deeper—to turn from mortal perceptions—and ask: What is really at work in human consciousness? It is a transcendent spiritual force.'

Khalil A. Nasir

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION

by

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

(Following is an English translation of Part I of **Haqiqatul Wahy**, a classic work in Urdu on Religious Experience by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India. We are indebted to Professor Qazi Muhammad Aslam for rendering it in English.)

ON PERSONS WHO CASUALLY HAVE TRUE DREAMS, EVEN TRUE REVELATIONS, BUT WHO ENJOY NO REAL CONTACT WITH GOD AND WHO HAVE NO REAL EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE LIGHT ENJOYED BY THOSE WHO COME TO HAVE A REAL CONTACT. PERSONS WHO HAVE ONLY CASUAL EXPERIENCES ARE MILES AWAY FROM EXPERIENCING THE LIGHT

Be it known that man has been created so that he should try and know his Creator and come to have faith—certain faith—in His person and His attributes. The mind and brain of man are so made that he is able on the one hand to discover God by rational observation of created things and by a consideration of the detail and design to be found in the particles and in the whole cosmic order of which the particles are ultimate parts. Rational observation convinces man that in this design and in its subtleties lies incontrovertible evidence of the Supreme Creator. The infinite grandeur of creation irresistably points to Him. The *choir of heaven and furniture of the earth* cannot have come by itself. It must have had a Creator.

On the other hand, man is also endowed with spiritual senses and spiritual powers. It means that when the rational powers of man fail to achieve true and full

knowledge of the Creator, the same may be achieved by man's spiritual powers. It is obvious that rational powers do not and cannot achieve a full perception of Almighty God. Rational powers can do no more than convince man that behind this creation of heavens and earth with all their unerring, unfailing, perfection of design, there **must be** a Supreme Creator. But this **must be** falls short of a conviction that there **is** such a Creator, existing and ever present. The need or necessity of a Creator may become evident, but may not be equal to full and felt knowledge. True, we have before us a grand variety of created things. It is also true that this variety of creation strongly suggests the existence of a Creator. But does the rationality of believing in the Creator's existence warrant the conviction that the Creator really exists? It follows that those who seek truth are endowed with a natural quest for truth and whose ambition is to achieve completely certain knowledge of things, must have, in addition to their rational powers, adequate spiritual powers by the exercise of which they can remove the veils which obstruct their view of the Ultimate Real. Only thus can they achieve a view of the Divine Being Whose beloved face they seek and Who is the Reality behind all things.

Our rational powers cannot give us a view of the face of this Ultimate Real. No wonder, therefore, the Merciful and Gracious God Who implanted in human beings this natural quest for full knowledge of reality, has endowed human beings with two kinds of powers—rational powers located in the mind and brain of man and spiritual powers located in the heart of man, the smooth working of which depends on the smooth working of our hearts. What rational powers fail to achieve, that spiritual powers succeed in achieving.

Our spiritual powers are passive. They have to be. They afford us the smoothness which results in reflecting the

graces of the Gracious God. Therefore, our spiritual powers must ever be ready to receive and reflect the graces of the Gracious Lord. For the successful performance of this function, there should be no veil, no obstruction between God and Man. Only thus can man achieve a perfect and full knowledge of God which he seeks. Experience of God and our knowledge of His existence should not amount only to holding that this cosmic order should have its Creator. No, we should be certain of the Creator's existence, and certainty can only come if our Creator blesses and graces us with His certain voice. We should be able to witness unmistakable signs of His existence. We should be able to view, as it were, His face and become certain of His presence. We should be able to say that the Creator really exists.

But human nature is shrouded in many veils. There is the love of this world in which our present life is cast; there is also this love of oneself, conceit, pride, thinking oneself different and superior, practising insincerity, placing our own selves above others, neglecting our duty to God and man, often deliberately, ignoring many another condition and requirement of the good life and of the subtleties of love and loyalty and living away with a sort of detachment from God Almighty. These are the veils surrounding our natures. Besides these veils we have our physical passions and desires.

(Let it be noted that prophets and divine messengers also have their passions and physical desires. There is, however, this difference. These holy men in seeking the approval of God Almighty, say goodbye to their natural dispositions and desires. They, as it were, kill these desires. God Almighty then lets them have over again. What they surrender is returned to them. They become normal human beings again, no longer devoid of natural desires. But those who do not kill their selfish desires for the sake of God, remain surrounded by desires which act as veils obstructing their view of God. They are like worms in corrupt soil. They meet their ultimate end in this very soil. God's holy men are not to be compared with these men. A prisonhouse has its staff and sentinels, but also the prisoners. The two are quite different.)

All these together make us unfit to receive any communications from the Divine Being. They make us incapable of receiving the light which communion and contact with the Divine connote. However, the Divine Being is gracious and desires not to let human beings fail completely to enjoy the contact which the holy men have with Him. Therefore, it is God's custom to let human beings have experiences of communion now and then in the shape of dreams and revelations which come true. When this happens, human beings know that there is a way open to know more and more. The occasional experiences of these men, however, are no evidence of special acceptance or approval by God, no proof of His love and grace. Such men remain involved in their animal natures. When they have true dreams or other similar experiences, it is because God wants to let them have some experience of what prophets and favorites of God have on a large scale. Ordinary men are not left without at least some experience of what the prophets have in abundance. If ordinary men had no such experience at all, if they did not have the least chance to deduce the existence of God from occasional contacts with Him, they would have had good excuse for not believing at all in God and His prophets. They could say they had no idea of what prophets are like, and what prophethood means as experience. They could say they remained completely ignorant and unaware of the possibility of knowing God through experience. They did not have the least bit of example in this regard. Therefore, they failed to appreciate and to understand the reality of spiritual experience. It remained hidden from them. Therefore, the custom of God from the beginning of time has been that all beings, of pious disposition or impious disposition, in love with good or with evil, their religious beliefs could be true

or false, all of them occasionally have the experience of dreams which come true, even of revelations which come true. This, so that their observation of nature and their conjectures about a Creator which they acquire from hearsay or social influences should acquire the status of knowledge, albeit the first stage of knowledge, which we may call knowledge by deduction or knowledge by inference.

(Knowledge is of three kinds. The most elementary is **Ilmul-Yaqeen** or knowledge by deduction. It is akin to deducing the existence of fire on seeing the smoke which it emits. The second stage of knowledge is **Ainul-Yaqeen**. This is akin to perceiving the fire with our own eyes. Or, knowledge by perception. The third is **Haqqul-Yaqeen**. This is when we assure ourselves of the existence of fire by putting our hand into it.)

God lets this happen so that men are able to advance on the spiritual path. The All-Wise God has made the human brain and mind so that man should be able to arrive at belief in God not only by deducing His existence from observation of nature, but also by acquiring a degree of conviction through his spiritual powers such as true dreams and true revelations bring. Only, we should remember that experiences of dreams and revelations which come only occasionally do not connote any spiritual status or rank for the experient. They come only as an example, a fragmentary example, of what spiritual advance can mean. These occasional experiences, visions and revelations, point only to the fact that those who have these experiences are in possession of appropriate natures.

If the men who possess such natures are able to guard themselves against selfish passions, and if there are no veils and obstructions oppressing them, they can go on advancing. It is like the land of which we have come to know

that underneath it is water which we can lift. Only, this water is buried under layers and layers of earth. If we choose to dig for it, we will first be lifting water mixed with a lot of mud of all sorts. It is after we have dug sufficiently deep that we will meet with transparent and sweet water fit for our use. It may entail many days of work before lifting of water becomes worthwhile. Those who treat their fragmentary experiences as all that it is possible to have in spiritual life and in terms of spiritual achievement, are only being mean and foolish and pessimistic.

Spiritual achievement does not end with these occasional experiences. It goes much further. For this we have to work hard and wait. There are conditions which we must fulfil before we can have the reward and joy of full achievement. Until these conditions are fulfilled, the occasional experiences we have are only a trial set by the Gracious Lord. And God save us, and save every spiritual toiler from the harm that fragmentary experiences can do.

Those who are keen on the subject of revelations (Ilham) should remember that **Ilham** or **Wahy** is of two kinds—**Wahyul Ibtala** (revelation as trial) and **Wahyul-Istifa** (revelation as reward). **Wahyul-Ibtala** (revelation or divine communication meant as trial for communicant) sometimes leads to the spiritual ruin of the person who receives it. Bal'am affords an example. But a person who receives **Wahyul-Istifa** (revelation which comes to the elect, the chosen ones of God) never met their ruin. For that matter **Wahyul-Ibtala** is not very cheap either. It is not received by all and sundry. For many are incapable, just incapable, of receiving any kind of revelation. They are like persons born deaf or mute or blind. Like these physically disabled persons, there are persons born without any spiritual powers. As the blind depend on others for their

movements, so depend on others those persons who happen to be devoid of spiritual powers. They accept—and cannot but accept—the testimony of others who are not blind. The testimony is valid and true—there are others who can see. The blind cannot say the others are blind equally with them.

We see it every day. No blind person can say—or would say—that those who claim to be able to see are liars. Nor can any blind person deny that thousands and thousands of persons other than him have their eyes intact. A blind person knows there are persons who are not blind and who go about using their eyes, and able to do things which the blind cannot do. True, we could in imagination pass to a time when the world happens to consist only of the blind, with not a single person who can see. The question could be raised: Was there ever a time when all persons were born with their eyes intact? The blind could say there never was such a time, and I seem to think the blind could get away with their denial. For, those holding the opposite view could only cite examples and experiences drawn from the past. They could not cite a single example, from their own time, of a person possessing this amazing power of seeing objects and judging distances. They admit these powers existed in the past, but not now. Such men lose the argument in the end.

The gracious Lord does not deal with His creatures in this way. Their physical endowment—their vision, their hearing, their sense of smell, of touch, their power of remembering, of thinking; men continue to have to this day. It does not stand to reason that the spiritual powers men had in the past, they no longer have today. They are gone with the past. And yet spiritual powers are more important

than physical powers for the proper development of the mind and spirit of man. The fact that physical powers are intact, that they continue as a possession of man—and everybody can see that it is so—shows how far away from truth are religious teachings which do not teach the continuity of man's spiritual powers. They admit the continuity of physical powers, they do not admit the continuity of spiritual powers, in the present as in the past.

The point we wish to make is this: Casual experiences of true dreams or true revelations are no indication of any spiritual status of the person who has such experiences. Other conditions have to be fulfilled in addition. These we will describe in Part III, *Insha Allah*. Casual experiences relate to the constitution of the brain or mind of the experient. One need not be a saint to have such experiences; nor necessarily a very good and truthful person for that matter. He need not even be a believer, nor a Muslim. Given a certain type of brain, a person may come to show a striking grasp and understanding of religious matters. Without being very religious; that is to say, he may show this in his reactions to everyday problems and questions. There is a tradition—an authentic tradition—which describes this type. Of such a person it may be said: 'his verse is a believer's verse, his heart an unbeliever's heart.' Says the poet:

How many a Satan,
who are masked Adams
No need therefore to take
everybody very seriously.

Persons of this category—who have true dreams, even true revelations now and then—but have no spiritual status, live their lives in the dark. They show no brightness

or glow such as you find on the faces of men of good moral fiber, except very rarely. Devotion to God and acceptance by Him are conspicuous by their absence. Knowledge of the unseen they reveal is not peculiar to them. It is shared by millions of others.

What I say can be checked. Casual experiences of true dreams or true revelations may be had by sinners or delinquents, by scoffers at religion, by women of loose character. They are not wise, therefore, who are unduly impressed by casual dreams or revelations coming true. They are sadly mistaken or misled who have these casual experiences of dreams or revelations, and begin to think they have achieved some spiritual rank. Remember, instead, that such persons are like the person who, surrounded by the darkness of a dark night, happens to see the faint smoke of a fire, but not the light nor the heat of that fire, nor experience its warmth or comfort from the cold. Such people— apart from these fragmentary experiences—do not have any share of the special blessings or favors of God. They are not accepted or approved by God in any way. They cannot be said to have any sort of relationship with God. They have not consigned their human weakness to the flame of Divine light. For lack of any true attachment of God, they are subject to evil influences of Satan. They react to themselves, their own minds, their own desires. It is like the sun covered by thick clouds invisible all the time except for a fleeting or faint view now and then. Those who have casual experiences of true dreams and revelations remain mostly in the dark, their experiences determined by Satan whose company they keep.

SUFISM

by

The Late Hafiz Maulana Raushan Ali

(This article was originally written by the author as a paper to be delivered at the historic World Religions Conference in London in 1924. Since its full text could not be read in the limited allotted time, only a summary was delivered in the Conference by Maulana Muhammad Din, an Ahmadiyya Missionary to the United States, on behalf of the author.

For the benefit of the readers of the *Muslim Sunrise*, the full text of this enlightening article is reproduced here.)

The word *Tassawwuf*, or Sufism, has been explained in various ways, two of which, perhaps, stand out conspicuous and essentially correct. *Soof*, the Arabic for wool, would make Sufi to mean the weaver of a simple, yet hard, woolen stuff to keep him alert and watchful. *Safwat* is another derivation which means purity and purification. This root has its support in the Arabic etymological rule of transposition or *Takleeb*. Since the true Sufis applied themselves heart and soul to the inner purification and the purging of heart of all sinful desires, as opposed to the general run of mankind whose one consuming desire is this world and its allurements, hence this blessed group who had turned their backs upon all the worldly ways were called Sufis, for in so doing they had nothing but complete transformation and change of heart in view.

Much has been written about the Sufis and Sufism, both in the East and in the West, and there is a vast and ever-growing literature by the Sufis themselves. It has been generally supposed that Sufism is a foreign growth, principally of Persian or Buddhist origin, and that its aims and teachings are mostly antagonistic to the real Islam, but

that on account of long contact and mutual interaction it has gradually found its way into Islam. Nothing can be farther from the facts. Professor Nicholson, who has gone deeper into the subject, has had to admit that such a theory is untenable. He says that modern research has "discredited the sweeping generalisations which represent Sufism as a reaction of the Aryan mind against a conquering semitic religion, and essentially a product of Indian or Persian thought."

"If Sufism," he goes on, "was nothing but a revolt of the Aryan spirit, how are we to explain the undoubted fact that some of the leading pioneers of Mohammedan mysticism were natives of Syria and Egypt, and Arabs by race." Muslim theology, philosophy and science, according to him, had put forth their first luxuriant shoots before Islam came into contact with Buddhism or Vedantism. "In spirit," he thinks, "Buddhism and Sufism are poles apart. The Buddhist moralises himself; the Sufi becomes moral only through knowing and loving God."

As a matter of fact, this Persian or Aryan reaction theory, in so far as the best and original Sufism is concerned, is not at all in consonance with the facts. The Persian and Aryan elements have played so large a part in purely Islamic sciences of Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, commentary, etc., that the fanciful flights of imagination could not even connect them with Hellenistic or Indo-Persian Influences. The mere fact that a Persian took a very prominent part in the movement in latter times is no ground for the assumption that it had a Persian origin, especially in the face of the fact that the whole warp and woof of Sufism is Islamic. The Hellenistic, or Egypto theories, are even more irrelevant, and so is the assertion that Sufism owes

anything to Christianity. To establish an historical connection in the words of the author of the *Mystic of Islam*, "It is not enough to bring forward evidence of their likeness to one another, and without showing at the same time (1) that the actual relation of B to A was such as to render the assumed affiliation possible, and (2) that the possible hypothesis fits in with all the ascertained and relevant facts,"

According to the great master minds among the Sufis, Islam has been the only religion with God, and whoever swerves even a hair's breadth from it is regarded by them as one who is groping in darkness and grovelling in the slough of ignorance. To the Sufis, Muhammad is the embodiment of all perfections and excellences; they call him the perfect example and exemplar. The light of Muhammad, the great ones among them think, existed before any other creation, and all other lights among mankind, they say, were but partial manifestation of the same which found its highest, brightest and completest expression in the person of Muhammad of Arabia—peace and blessings of God be upon them all. They maintain that the religion of all the prophets has been Islam, the difference being in degree only, the essentials being the same. All these teachers, they say, emphasized service to God as well as service to their fellow men, which is summed up in the word Islam, which means total and utter submission to the will of Allah. Love, they admit, should be the guiding motive for a novice and the early initiate, and they quote chapters and verses from the Holy Quran and the tradition of the Holy Prophet. They quote Jesus and Buddha, and others too, not to base the principles of their teachings, for which they go to Islam alone, but for corroboration only, and they assert that even love has its selfish side.

Therefore, for a perfect and highest grade of Sufi they recommend the passionless, yet most active, state of one who, in perfect resignation to the will of Allah, forgets his own self altogether but whose life is one continuous chain of activities in the way of God. This, according to them, is the first stage of an aspirant to perfection. Yet it should not be confused with Buddhist idea of Nirvana, which the Sufis wholly repudiate, and which we will have occasion to refer to later on.

To know Sufism we shall have to know its history from the Sufi point of view, not that we have to swallow what an interested party has to say but because theirs is the first-hand information, and they are in the best position to deal with it sympathetically. We can of course apply all the canons of history and historical criticism, but the framework must be theirs. As we have stated above, all the great teachers from the Sufi point of view have been the great master-Sufis of the world, Muhammad standing at the top of them all—the ideal and the perfect man, *Al Insanul Kamil*, and Islam as the most perfect expression of Sufism. They say that when this *Insanul Kamil* appeared, the world was steeped in the worst form of superstition, ignorance and wickedness, and the Arabs were the worst people in that respect. Yet, under the benign rays of that Heavenly Light, they were changed into the most God-fearing Divine lovers that the world has ever seen. Not only did they become lode-stars in the Spiritual firmament, but in the arts and sciences they became the torch bearers. Under the magnetic influence and divine training of that Heavenly personality the Arabs saw a wonderful development of all the human faculties and powers, and when the time of his departure from this earthly place drew near they were in a position to carry on his work of world

transformation, and the whole world witnessed miraculous changes. This generation did its work, and passed away, making room for another that took up the same, and they too passed away, leaving their work in the hands of their successors. During this interval new peoples and nations had begun to join the ranks of this great Sufi. The Arabic speaking nations could understand him better because he spoke their language and lived their ways. Moreover, they were the eye witnesses. With the coming in of the non-Arabs the work increased, and in the course of time, according to individual tastes and temperaments, division of labor necessarily followed. Arabic speaking nations, or those who adopted Arabic as their mother tongue, did not feel any linguistic or traditional difficulty. They had seen the great Sufi himself, or they had seen those who had seen him and were imbued with his spirit, or those who had seen these latter people, had been living in contact with them. But, to the non-Arabs, the difficulty of language, life, tradition, and the Divine word had all to be explained, and none could show a better zeal or a greater sincerity than these non-Arabs themselves who had at first resisted and persecuted the great Sufi but had now become his ardent admirers. So, along with the Arabs, we find the non-Arabs, particularly the Persians, writing treatises on Arabic grammar, Arabic commentaries of the Holy Quran, and Islamic jurisprudence for the benefit of their own countrymen as well as their kindred. It was not cleavage, or a reaction; it was as it should have been.

Another great factor at work was the time. The Sufi historians write, and human experience all over the world confirms their statement, that with the lapse of time Spiritual influence of the great Sufi began to wane. Wealth with all that it stands for, began to exert its own influence;

the past took on the halo of romance; experience became dimmed with the onrush of the world, and the hopes of future spiritual advancement took on a remoter aspect. This was one great factor; but there were other natural causes at work. Every man, in order to emphasize the importance of his own science and subject in which he was interested, had to devote his whole life to it with the result that the subject of his interest became a passion with him. Emphasis was laid on each subject, individually and separately, which is a necessary concomitant as well as a consequence of the principle of division of labor. So long as the Master Sufi was among them there was no question of this division of work. He was all in all. He loved his teachings, and he was the perfect Divine exemplar and so were his immediate followers. He had passed away, and his companions and the generation following them who were imbued with the spirit of the Master had all passed away. There was no question of division of labor then, but it was unavoidable now. The great Sufis of this period, realizing the advantages and disadvantages of this position, took up this spiritual work, not by way of protest, but for the sake of collaboration and to complete the work of the other laborers in the field.

The Sufi historians insist upon and reiterate the fact that Muhammad, the Master Sufi, stood for all that is best in man, whether it relates to his physical or intellectual, mental or spiritual life. According to them, he was the beau ideal of all that is best in the multitudinous aspects of the human life. They adduce facts from his life to show how he was in the world and yet he could lead a detached life. So long as this attachment stood for a divine purpose and fulfilled it, he was for it. Yet he was willing to sacrifice it if it in any way stood between him and his God, for their

point of view is this, that the sole purpose of religion especially of Islam—is to establish the right relation between God and man and the service of humanity. Prayers and fasts, pilgrimages and sacrifices were established, not that they are an end in themselves but because they are a means to an end. They say, for instance, that where the Holy Word enjoins prayer it emphasizes the end too, for it says that prayer should be for the purpose of checking and restraining evil- the evil inclination of man. Moreover, they argue that if prayer was an end in itself, why is it that elsewhere the same word of God pronounces woe on a certain type of suppliant. So it is with fasting. The same verse which enjoins it also lays down the purpose of cultivating piety and devotion as the result of it. Similar is the case with sacrifice. The word of God, they say, unmistakably points out that the blood and flesh of the slain animal does not reach God; that it is the piety and purity of the heart and the sincerity of the motive which inspires and actuates this sacrifice, that reaches God.

“It is a greater pilgrimage to master thyself; one heart is worth more than a thousand Kaabas. The Kaaba was built by Khalil son of Azar, but the heart is the passage of the Great one.” In this way they point out the purpose and the function of every part of the Islamic ritual. At the same time they are careful to carry out the law to the very letter, for they say, though it is the Spirit which is the Life, there can be no life without the body. They could think of and abstraction apart from the object, but no abstraction could exist without the thing. That is why they set out with the purpose of completing and fulfilling, and never for the purpose of cancellation or abolition, for that, they said, was the way to libertinism, which they abhorred with greater repugnance than even the literalists. This co-operation bet

ween them and the other workers in other branches of Islam continued without any hitch until degeneracy set in among all the branches.

Faithful recorders as they are of events, they could not of course slur over the clashes that subsequently followed between the formalists and themselves, but this took place late in the day when both sides began to drift towards the extremes. The best days of the formalists in the most prosperous days of formalism coincided with the best days of Sufism, and that covered a long period of many centuries. The rift came when schismatic persons on both sides began to emphasize their point of view to the discredit of the others, which sane people in every party have always looked upon with dislike.

At present the past bitterness has given place to toleration on both sides, though glimpses of the old rivalry sometimes find expression in acrimonious writings; but on the whole there is a good deal of toleration of each other. Says Professor Nicholson, "The Sufis, instead of being excommunicated, are securely established in the Mohammedan Church."

As we have stated above, the Sufi teachings were taken in hand at the right moment by the Arabs and non Arabs, the Persians, in particular. It was due to the beauties of Islam that the Persians entered into its fold. They too, took up the Spiritual cause with great avidity. Had they joined with the purpose of breaking up Islam, or had their action been due to the natural reaction set in by a superior yet decadent civilization, how is it that we have men of Persian descent or origin like Imam Muhammad Bin Ismail Bukhari, Muslim Bin Hajjaj of Nishapur, Abu Eassa Tirmadhi, the great Jurist Imam Abu Haneefa No'man, Imam

Abu Yusef, Ya'Kub, See-vaih and Abu Ali Farsi—the last three being the greatest grammarians, who have all played an important role in the history of Islam and its propagation. It is difficult to find such a galaxy of famous names even in the ranks of the Sufis, who were proud to follow them, as well as the great Arab Muslims, in all reverence. Moreover, some of the greatest names in Jurisprudence have been equally great in Sufism—for instance, Abu Haneefa, Shafae, and Rabia Basri. Necessity is the mother of invention; it was necessity that drove them in various directions. The various branches of Muslim religion were taken up by the great ones when a need was felt for them. In short, the Persians did not take part only in the Sufi Movement but their activities were visible everywhere in all branches in the interests of Islam. If the mere reading of the Holy Quran was needed, they were in the forefront. If the need for Spiritual side was felt, we find them shoulder to shoulder with others.

Why the Sufi propaganda was not given a prominence in the early days of Islam, was because it was not needed. When people lead a righteous life and they have a thorough grasp of the subject in its essential and practical side, it is useless to give them a formal instruction. If a person knows a language as his mother tongue, there is very little need for him to have a grammatical instruction. Yet grammatical side is emphasized when foreigners need to learn it. All these sciences took their birth at the right time. The companions of the Holy Prophet did not need to be instructed in Sufism, say the great Sufi writers, though we find that as early as the days of the Khilfat of Ali, Ali himself, his son Hassan, Abu Zarr Ghaffari, and a host of others devoted themselves to this cause because the foreign element had begun to increase. So was the genera

tion that followed them, as also were the followers of these followers. But as with the lapse of time the Spiritual light began to dim, so with the coming in of new people the need arose, and by and by Sufism developed into a regular science.

The Sufi writers, especially those of Persian origin, give another very interesting explanation of the Persian obsession with Sufism. Sufism, they say, is the spirit of Islam. As soon as the Persians realized that they had committed a very great mistake in resisting and persecuting the Master Sufi of all times, and the realization dawned upon them that they had been the greatest losers in rejecting the Divine blessings, then, with a contrition of spirit born of sincere and deep regret, they tried their best to make good their past; and if some of them outstripped some of their Arab contemporaries, it is not to be wondered at, for it was all due to the zeal born of a repentent spirit. Some of them showed such great earnestness in their new work that they are ranked with some of the very prominent men of the first generation. They tried to reproduce in themselves that same spirit that animated the first generation. That is why some of these Sufi writers, writing from a subjective point of view, give so much prominence to these advanced Sufis.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SUFISM

Sufism is based upon the LOVE OF GOD and the SERVICE OF HUMANITY. So say the Sufis. As a matter of fact, both of these principles are really one—the Divine LOVE. Ethics and morals, service and right life, are the direct result of this love, say their great leaders. The initiative, they say, always rests with Divine Love which induces human love as with the process of induction. As soon as human love begins to stir, the Divine love begins to descend

and unite with the human love. The Sufi writers quote a well-known saying of the Prophet which says that God told him that He was a hidden treasure, but He willed to be known and so He created Adam. Again, continues the Prophet, if a man stirs, God moves towards him; if he walks, then God runs in his direction.

It should be borne in mind that though now and then these Sufi teachers quote Jesus, Buddha, Socrates and others, that is only in additional support and confirmation of their views, but they base their teachings invariably on the Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet. Ibn al Arabi declares that no religion is more sublime than a religion of Love. He claims that Islam is peculiarly the religion of Love, inasmuch as the Prophet Muhammad is called God's Beloved (Habib), and that is why they have laid the greatest stress on love." Man's love of God," says Hujwairi, "is a quality which manifests itself in the heart of the pious believers ... who abjure the recollection of everything beside." "I fancied I loved God," said Bayazeed, "but on consideration I saw that His love preceded mine." Junaid defined love as the substitution of the qualities of the Beloved for the qualities of the Lover, relying on the well-known saying of the Holy Prophet which says that man's love is really the effect of God's love. "If I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty." says Rabia Basri.

Again:

"His love entered and removed all besides Him, and left no trace of anything else, so that it remained single as He is single." (Bayazeed.)

"To feel at one with God for a moment is better than all men's acts of worship from the beginning of the world to

the end of the world." (Shiblee).

"Fear of the fire in comparison with the fear of being parted from the Beloved is like a drop of water cast into the mightiest ocean." (Dhun Noon).

"Thyself hast Thou sprinkled salt on the wound that has raised the cries of Thy distressful lovers. The mellowness of a sweet face is a part of Thy beauty, and every curled lock points to Thee." (Hazrat Ahmad).

"O Love, what wonderful signs hast Thou shown. The cut and the salve hast Thou made the same in the way of the Beloved. Thy love is a remedy for a thousand ills. By Thy Face, the real release consists in Thy bondage." (Far-ruk).

"If the secret of Love between Him and me had been disclosed, thousands of lives would have been offered as a sacrifice at my door." (The Promised Messiah).

"The Muslim mystics enjoyed greater freedom of speech than their Christian brethren who owed allegiance to the medieval Catholic Church," says Professor Nicholson, "and if they went too far, the plea of ecstasy was generally accepted as a sufficient excuse.... Their expressions were bold and uncompromising."

We know that they never hesitated to use sayings of Jesus and other great teachers by way of supplementary proofs of their teachings, but perhaps it would be a surprise to many that they very rarely used the Gospel definition that God is Love. Their point of view is so sublime that such a definition would not fit in. Love, according to them, is one of the attributes, and not a whole definition of God, that is why they always rely on the Holy Quran and the traditions, and the works of other Muslim Saints. Fatherhood of God seems an imperfect idea to them, that is

why the Quranic verse, *"O ye believers, remember God with an intensity of love as ye remember your parents, or rather more."* goes deeper into their hearts. Another verse which throws them into raptures is: *"O ye believers, if you love God then follow me, and thus you (yourselves) will become the beloved of God."* Love of the Prophet and love of the Word of God with them are tantamount to Divine Love—a practical expression of it. That is why they can never be dissociated from God according to the Sufi interpretation.

This Divine Love has found its highest expression in total resignation and complete submission to the Will of Allah according to the great Sufi minds. *"Thy Will be done"* was spoken to give expression to this very sentiment. As a matter of fact, this is the culminating stage of Love. How enraptured and how eloquent the Sufi writers are when in glowing words they comment upon the following Quranic verses:

"Say, if your parents or your children, your brothers or your wives and your other kith and kin, and the hoardings that you have amassed together, and the business of whose slackness you are afraid, and the mansions that you love—if these things are dearer to you than Allah and His Prophet, and striving in His way, then wait till Divine decision arrives; verily, God never guides the violators of solemn pledges."

"Say: My prayers and my sacrifices, my life and my death are for Allah. There is none beside Him. That is my order (duty) and I am the first of the believers."

Love of God and total submission to His Will are the first and the last principles, and the whole foundation of Islam,

according to these Sufi minds, is based upon these two hinges.

VARIOUS STAGES OF SUFISM

Of course, Sufism has been developed into a science, even the minutest points of a person's character having been classified. It is at once a composite of ethics, philosophy, metaphysics, psychology and spiritualism, etc. A vast literature has been written on every phase of the subject, and abstruse problems such as the reality of God, His Unity, the problem of good and evil, responsibility of man, or otherwise, God and His attributes, Pantheism, created and uncreated things, matter and soul, life and death, and almost all the points have been dealt with in great detail and with a depth of mind which would baffle the students of abstruse psychology of today. It is impossible to deal with them here. Suffice it to say that with the master minds among the Sufis, these were not mere mental exercises. Their discussion had always a bearing on life, and they did live upto their professions. Whatever views they expressed, they never meant to be libertines. All their efforts were directed to the improvement of their self. As they have reduced this Sufism to a science, they have their own terminology. The Sufi who sets out to seek God is called a Salik (a traveller). He advances by slow stages (maqamat) along a path (tariqat) to the goal of union with Reality (fana fil Haqiqat). In general, there are seven stages: (1) Repentance (2) Abstinence; (3) Renunciation; (4) Poverty; (5) Patience; (6) Trust in God; and (7) Satisfaction.

After the traveller has progressed along this path, he is raised to the higher planes of Ma'rifat (Gnoses) and Haqiqat (the Truth). It would be well to note that the Sufi renunciation differs from Christian and Buddhist renunciations.

The Sufi is a true Muslim. He does not believe in mere other-worldliness, or celibacy and monasticism. All the great Sufi teachers led happy married lives. This renunciation is the right use of all the powers given to man by God. The Sufi is in the world, yet he is out of it. He braves the risks like a courageous, dutiful soul. He never shrinks his responsibility, for the Prophet had said that an unmarried person who shirked the great responsibility of life could not be trusted with higher responsibilities.

The Sufis have three more advanced stages. As a matter of fact, the divisions are many, but these three roughly include them all. They are **Fana**, **Liqā**, and **Baqā**. Fana means total effacement of one's self, so much so that the adept becomes merged in Divine presence. He eats and drinks, prays and fasts, not that he likes to do it but because he is impelled to do it. God is all in all for him. "*Turn to your Creator and surrender yourself to Him,*" says the Holy Word; and the Sufi, in contemplation of this, just puts himself at the disposal of his Creator, as the dead corpse in the hands of an undertaker. He thinks of the Holy Prophet's words "Die before your death"; and in keeping with his origin that he is a perishable thing after all, for the word says: "Everything is perishable but what comes under Divine Will," he undergoes a death to receive an eternal life; not that he wants it, but because it is the Divine Will, which in Sufi terminology stands for Law. That is the stage of Fana, or passing away into Divine Presence. Rumi has well illustrated this stage of Fana or self-effacement in the following verses:

When a fairy comes to possess a man,
He loses his attributes of man.

Whatever he says is through the inspiration of that
fairy.

It is neither from this nor from that brain.

Gone is his own individuality, he himself becomes that
fairy.

Arabic to a Turk comes as a mother tongue without any
revelation

When he is lost to himself he knows nothing of the
language.

For knowledge is the person and attributes of the fairy
How can then the Creator of man and spirit be less than
a fairy

If this influence and law hold good in the case of a fairy,
We can well judge the powers of the Creator of the
fairy.

When he (the drunkard) is under the influence of old or
new wine he begins to speak.

You would say, "It is the wine that is speaking."

If this noise and fuss are due to wine,

Could it be possible that the Light of God can be without
force and power?

Though the Quran has come out of the lips of the
Prophet,

Infidel is he who says that God has not said it.

Unlike Nirvana, Fana, the passing away of the Sufi from
his phenomenal existence, involves Baqa, the continuance
of his real existence. He who dies to self lives in and with
God, but not in the pantheistic sense as is generally supposed.
The Sufi is opposed to deification.

Rumi, who has been accused of being a believer in pan-
theism, clearly refutes this idea in his well known couplet:

To say I am He at the wrong moment (as did Pharaoh)
is a curse.

To say I am He at the right moment (as did Hallaaj Ibn
Mansoor) is a blessing.

Yet, as he thinks that his soul has proceeded from the hands of his Creator and that his self is but a reflection of the Real Self, so he always aims at continual progress. The elder Sufis never lost sight of the fact that they were human, and though in their periods of illumination and union, they sometimes thought they were lost to themselves, just as the shadow vanishes when the sun is high in heavens, they never lost sight of the fact that they were mere human and that their ultimate aim was to continue in a state of Baqa—eternal life—actuated and moved by the instinctive desire for unification called Liqa in their language. That is why the elder Sufis never went beyond the bounds of the Law. Such a state of mind, according to their best judgement, bordered upon apostasy. "Strive hard in the path of truth and rectitude, piety and devotion," says Saadi, "yet never dream of trespassing the bounds set by Mustafa (Muhammad)."

Two more stages the advanced Sufis claim are *lahoot* and *nasoot*. When the Sufi has traversed all the stages until he has attained to the stage of Baqqa, or Eternal Continuance, he is supposed to have stepped into the stage of that which they call *lahoot* in which stage the Sufi remembers nothing but God. He is dead to all else besides, and he feels that he is, as it were, at unison with Him. At this stage, all his actions and all his movements are due to Divine urge—rather Divine Will—for that is the stage of "there is none but Allah (*La ilaha illallah*).” The Sufi is nowhere, but God is everywhere. This stage has its degrees the beginning and culminating points. That is the ascent of the Sufi, which in his own terminology he calls *Mi'rag* (ascent), and when the climax arrives, then he begins to descend, which should not be confused with decline, for this descent is higher than his previous ascent.

It happens in this way; Divine Love is the source of all creation, and Divine love is the supporter and maintainer of it. It is the Divine Love that first inspires the Sufi to seek union; and now that the consummation has arrived, he is not his own previous self but Love himself, and now he desires to manifest himself. Here the Sufi writers quote the wellknown saying of the Prophet Muhammad, in which God says that He was hidden treasure and that He desires to be realized, and so He created Adam. The Sufi believes that God is the Creator, and it is in the realization of His attribute of Creation that He brought forth Adam. Hence, after this ascent, when the Sufi becomes united with God, Divine attributes begin to manifest themselves through him. As Divine Love is always flowing out to meet the needs of humanity, so the Sufi, the highest embodiment of Divine Love, begins to evince and ultimately manifest his love for humanity, which is termed service, and this is called the stage of Muhammad Rasool Allah,—that is, the Sufi, the reflection of Muhammad, has now become the messenger of God. That is the stage of Mujaddid, and a Nabi, both of these having their own stages, degrees and qualities, the highest being the stage of Muhammad, which the Sufis call the Light of Muhammad. The Sufis here draw a very fine distinction. Love of God with them is the first and the original inspirer, but progress depends upon the human soul, for which effort is necessary. This self effort, which is a reaction of the human soul to the Divine action, then leads him on to the stage of submission, total and entire, where all his movements become Divine. Here the Sufi's action becomes God's action. The highest stage is that of the prophet, where the prophet is only the instrument and God works through him. All this is included in the stage of nasoot. One of the stages in this state of nasoot is the stage of burooz.

According to the Sufis, Muhammad is the Perfect Man, Al-Insan-al Kamil, and it was to realize this or that aspect of the Light of Muhammad that the other prophets have been appearing in this world, and the perfection was fully realized when Muhammad himself appeared. All the prophets that appeared before him were but a partial reflection, the reality alone was Muhammad himself. Just as John the Baptist was the second coming of Elijah, so were the earlier prophets the forerunners and heralds of Muhammad, and now that he has appeared he has become the seal of the prophets. The other prophets came only to herald his coming. They were the pioneers, and in the absence of the Master they were allowed a free hand. Hence they are called independent prophets. Now that the Master Himself is holding the court and swaying His dominations, nobody can assume independence; each one has to act under His guidance. That is why the Sufis (one and all) regard His law as final, and Muhammad the last of the prophets. Dependent prophets, of course, may continue, and in fulfilment of the ancient prophecies and Sufi beliefs, there has appeared one who is the burooz of Muhammad in the full sense of the word, and he is no other than the late Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, the Second Christ, the Buddha Matreya, the Second Krishana, the greatest Sufi of the age, and the successor of Muhammad.

It is better to state here that the Sufi term burooz is not reincarnation theory, which the Sufis totally reject. Burooz means the appearance of one in the power and spirit of another, just as John the Baptist was Elijah that was to come, yet Elijah was dead and he could not come back to this life. This phenomenon of recurrence the Sufis use in a spiritual and metaphorical sense. The Second

Christ or the Second Buddha does not mean that both these dead personages have taken a re-birth. The second one is individually different, but corresponds to his prototypes in some of his spiritual traits. Moreover, the correspondence in situation needs correspondence in character, neither more nor less.

The Sufis are opposed to *hulul* and *tanasukh*, that is, they reject both the theory of re-incarnation, transmigration, and metempsychosis, and they also deny that there is anything like one soul possessing or overshadowing another.

SUFISM AND ISLAM

The elder Sufis were true Muslims. They lived and taught nothing but Islam, and the emphasis that they laid on the spiritual side was only to revive the pristine, pure, Islamic spirit. Islam stands for the whole, while Sufism is but one of its aspects. Moreover, Sufism has no constructive side, nor does it stand independent. It stands and falls with Islam.

Like everything else, Sufism has been affected during its history of many centuries. The present day Sufism, though built on the old lines, has undergone some change. Some of the present day practices and teachings are not in conformity with the original Sufism. Renunciation in the sense of celibacy and monasticism was never countenanced by the great Sufis; what they taught was the same as is taught by Islam. They never used it in the sense of severance of human relations and retiring into woods and forests leading anchorite lives, having nothing to do with this world. That is a great departure from the old Sufi point of view. All that Islam and early Sufism insisted upon was that real attachment should be with God. Support and care

and maintenance of one's wife and upbringing and looking after one's children is one of the primary duties of man. Under the mistaken notion of serving God with a singleness of purpose they have forsaken the world. They are just like a horse that runs without a load or carriage, but as soon as he is loaded or yoked he stops short and kicks. What Sufism and Islam required of a man was that he should learn to stand, walk and run in spite of hindrances and handicaps, so as to bring out the best in him. As a matter of fact, the care of all these things in the right spirit is a part of Divine worship. That is why the Sufi writers have insisted on the law which says, "There is to be no monasticism in Islam." God has willed that all these things should be well looked after, and yet a monk disregards all these duties. That is one of the practical abuses that has found its way into some present day Sufi orders, whose practices, in certain instances, are a direct infringement of the teachings of the great Sufi Master. The Shariat, or law of Islam, has always stood mounted guard to counteract such tendencies.

Another mistake pertaining to belief has also crept into some of the present day orders. One is the belief in transmigration and re-incarnation (tanasukh and hulool). The elder Sufis have always rejected it. What they mean by recurrence is, the reversion of the old types. Some Sufis represent the spirit and power of some of the past Sufis, and therefore they sometimes have asserted their identity with their prototypes. This has been understood to mean re-incarnation, etc., which the elders have expressly repudiated as abomination. As we have explained elsewhere, this reversion of types they term a burooz which means the coming of another in the power and spirit of the departed one. These elder Sufis cite one of the say

ings of the Holy Prophet, which says that some people among his followers are born in the spirit of Abraham, while others in the spirit of Mosès, and Jesus, and other prophets. But they are not the same. It is only the prominence in resemblance which entitles a person to a certain name. Ahamd of Qadian has appeared in our day in the power and spirit of Jesus, and that is why his coming is the coming of Jesus. It was necessary to guard against these corruptions that the form of Shariat was maintained by them, and it was in conformity with the law that the elder Sufis have all rejected re-incarnation and other theories that border on polytheism.

MYSTICISM AND SUFISM

Sufism has generally been confused with Mysticism. The misunderstanding has been due to the apparent similarity in the meanings of the word "mysticism" and "sirr." But the "sirr" of Sufi is not the mystery of the mystic, for the Sufi had nothing to conceal. To a Sufi the word connotes the reality underlying anything, whether it be a phenomenon. As the reality of every one's experience is known only to one's self that is why sometimes the Sufi emphasizes individual rather than common experience, because it is a thing to know which one has to go through himself. One can instruct another in formalism, but discipline and illumination are an individual affair.

This attitude of a Sufi has been attributed to a mystifying habit, which is surely an unfair judgment on him. So Mysticism and Sufism are two different things altogether.

ORDERS IN SUFISM

There are many orders of Sufism with many more sub-orders. They all started with the same principles and the

same practices, differing only in minor details, and the idiosyncracies of the individual. These orders are all known by the names of the different persons who first founded the movement in their own localities. There has been no difference whatever so far as the elders and the best people in these movements have been concerned. But with the lapse of time and the differences of tastes, temperaments and traits of character, and the atmosphere and environments that surrounded them, there were developed certain practices, which though harmless perhaps at first, led in the end to wide cleavages, not only in matters of details but even in principles of actions. The present day orders are mostly of the above type, who neither care for the law nor for the behests of great minds of their movements. This degeneracy was mostly the result of contact with peoples that had themselves deviated from the right path and who now have come to think more of hypnotism, mesmerism, auto-suggestion, and cure by suggestion, which the elder Sufis never cared much about, though of course during the course of their disciplines, these, or some of these things, came to them of themselves, and were perhaps made use of very often unconsciously, but these were never the chief nor the sole means. These latter day Sufis, having lost the spirit and the reality, now looked about for something tangible, and as the sudden results achieved themselves through these alien practices along with the fact that there was some similarity between these practices and some of the actions of their elders, which they never tried to fathom, they devoted themselves to these things to the exclusion of the reality, and that is the reason we meet with fraud, hypocrisy and imposture so often. Some of them have adopted the heathenish practices of bowing and prostrating before men, offering liba

tions to dead saints, kneeling before the tombs of saints, offering prayers to the living and dead. Some think themselves above every law, thus giving a free rein to every passion. It is fortunate that there are not very many of them, but it is undeniable that they are a part of the society, however low it may be. But they have nothing in common with the real Sufism of Islam.

Though there are many orders and sub-orders, the following ones are the major groups:

1. Qadiriyya: founded by Sheikh Abdul Qadir of Geelan, a great Saint, whose name still exercises a great influence.
2. Naqshbandiya: founded by Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Naqshband, a great Saint. This order has also a great following.
3. Chistiyya: founded by Khwaja Moeen-ud-Din, a great Saint, who has a good many followers in India.
4. Suhrawardi: founded by Sheikh Shahab-ud-Din Suhrawardi, another great Saint, who has a good following in the Arabic speaking countries.

In addition to the above four, we have the Jalalees, the followers of Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, the author of the famous Masnavi. Though his followers are found mostly in Asia Minor and Egypt, howling and dancing dervishes mostly belonging to this order, yet his book has had a great influence all over the East.

Shazlee is another group, which is found in Arabia, but they are not much heard of outside.

As we have said before, all started from the same point, and on the very same principles, but new practices, like a twelve-year feast, breathing exercises of the Yogis, tuning

of the heart to Allah hoo, mental concentration, or the drawing in of the mental picture of the Sheikh or spiritual guide have sprung up. They are quite foreign to the spirit as well as the form of Sufism, and one acquainted with the law of growth knows that along with the true growth there are always weeds that need a constant weeding. The old Sufism has lost its vitality, and God in His mercy has sent down a gardener to restore Sufism to its pristine purity, so that the fountains of spirituality which had been choked up by this foreign growth may be cleared and the waters of life may gush out again to bring fertility to a soil barren and unsown for so long a time. Blessed are they who hearken to this messenger who appeared in the fullness of time, and he is no other than Ahmad of Qadian, India.

The writer of this paper is a Qadarite of the Nau-sha-ee Order. The founder, Muhammad Hajee, lived in the eleventh century of the Islamic era. He gained a great popularity owing to the nobility of his character, as well as learning, piety and devotion, so much so that there is no part in India without his followers. After his passing away, the leadership has, through eleven generations, devolved upon this humble servant who is at present the sole representative so far as hereditary succession is concerned. I was born, educated and brought up in this purely Sufi atmosphere, while all the members of my family have been men of enlightened scholarly disposition and tastes, and in their own day and time they have exercised a very healthy influence upon the society in general. From my bare youth upwards I gave myself up to Sufi devotions and esoteric practices along with my studies; as a matter of fact, all my life has been passed in literary pursuits as well as in the cultivation of Sufi experiences. My own order, I had come to realize long ago, had fallen away from the right path.

Instead of leading a life of righteousness and rectitude and following the paths of virtue, they had degenerated into what may aptly be termed as "pagan practices," and the love and fear of God had given place to the irreverent sex practices and addiction to dope. The Elders of our Order used to give themselves up to silent prayers and devotions, meditations and contemplation, leading a life of goodness and active beneficence. They loved God and their fellow men to an extent that they forgot their selves, but now a sham forgetfulness is brought on by taking bhang and strong liquors, and the eating and smoking of opiates of all kinds. The Elders brought on self oblivion by forgetting themselves in God, but now these people have begun to forget themselves in ecstatic frenzy under the influence of dope by hanging themselves upside down from trees and posts and swinging their bodies back to and fro with strong jerks and wild unearthly yells. Instead of going about doing acts of mercy and goodness they now roam about dancing and yelling, beating drums and tomtoms and shouting meaningless formulas to the tunes of a violin or guitar. These roamings they call "pilgrimages." The love of God has given place to the love of sex, which they term "Ishq-i-Majazi," which they say is the preparaton for and the only avenue to the former—the Ishq-i-Haqiqi of their terminology, and this dope and sex have led to the undoing of many. Unmentionable excesses in the name of Sufism have been continued and countenanced, and what stood for morality and purity of life has now degenerated into a cult of depravity and moral looseness. Under these circumstances, I turned to God for guidance, and He in His mercy and Goodness has revealed to me that through heavenly visions and divine manifestations the real Sufi of the age is Ahmad of Qadian, India. As my studies also led me in the

same direction, I did not hesitate to sacrifice my all to drink at the fountain-head of the true Sufism that has sprung up afresh in the holy person of Ahmad. I have tasted of this nectar and the water of life, and in all humility and sincerity I invite all to this truth that Divine Love has revealed to me. The peace and the blessings of Allah be upon those who follow the truth.



ENTERING THE GATEWAY OF ISLAM

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

by

A. F. Umar Khan

Look at the door, what do you see? Hinges... latches... wood... nails... locks.... If the style of architecture is alien to you, you may not appreciate it at first. However, once you sense the care and skill that went into the creation of a such a door, you may eventually be able to preceive its beauty. On the other hand, if the style is familiar, you may feel more comfortable with it, or even overlook its intricate details as being too mundane, In either case, the door was created to fill a very utilitarian purpose and to extend a step beyond mere usefulness into the realm of esthetics.

Islam is an ornate doorway, the style is considered "oriental" and alien to the West. Due to past competition, the architecture of this doorway has been reputed to be incompatible with the graceful Romanesque or gigantic Gothic styles which dominates Western religious thinking. To embrace Islam, for a Westerner, has been perceived as requirng a total remodeling of exteriors. There has seemed to be something distinctly un-American in the flowing lines and odd-sounding names attached to this "Arab" religion.

The American experience has seen mass conversions to "oriental" religions, especially during the 1960's, as a rejection of the establishment and parental values by the youth. Saffron robes and gurus, backed by sitars, incence, and marijuana, have usually marked such middle-class conversions. A tendency towards "cultishness" has come to the foreground through the public disgust which followed the

tragedy in Jonestown, Guayana. Islam's part in this public experience has, regretfully, been in the form of Islamic principles which were adapted, and used both as rallying points for an oppressed minority and as a weapon against the system and individuals which oppressed them. Luckily, the past several years have witnessed a splintering of the radical elements of this movement. The public awareness seems to be primarily unchanged, and a certain ethnicity seems to be associated with American Islam both from within and from without.

The fact of the matter is that Islam is not an Arab religion. The Prophet Muhammad was an Arab. The Holy Qur'an, containing the message of the Prophet Muhammad, was revealed in Arabic. But, Islam is not tied to any one culture. The prevalence of Arabs and Arabic in Islamic history and philosophy is more a factor of human condition than cultural superiority.

A human can only be born in one place, to one time and condition. It stands to reason that a prophet, too, must be born within these restrictions. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad (in the seventh century A.D.), there was no great Arab empire, nor were the Arabs considered "pacesetters." Yet, by previous prophetic tradition, the Arabs were descended from one of the most respectable lines of prophecy—that of the biblical Prophet Abraham, through his son Ismail. Had God chosen, the "Seal of the Prophets" could have been born anywhere, and wherever he had been born there would be those who would object that he should have been born a Jew, an Italian, or a member of some other race. However, the fact remains that there is no special "grace" in being born an Arab Muslim, or in being born a Muslim in any other country.

As far as the language of the Holy Qur'an is concerned apart from it being the language of the Prophet Muhammad: Arabic is the oldest language and had reached a point in development and standardization unequalled at the time. As a result, a modern Arabic-speaking person can pick up a copy of the Holy Qur'an and read it without difficulty. On the other hand, anyone trying to read Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (written centuries after the Holy Qur'an) will find it cannot be easily read or understood by the modern English-speaking person. In addition, Arabic is an incredibly expressive language, and the Holy Qur'an makes brilliant use of poetry to mix perfection of message with the perfection of language. The Holy Qur'an contains a challenge to the world for anyone to create a literary equal. Yet, with all of this perfection of language, it is important to remember that the Prophet Muhammad could neither read nor write when he received the first revelation.

As a result of the deep meanings attached to most of the carefully selected words contained in the Holy Qur'an, the Arabic language has played an essential role in the development of Islamic theology and law. But, within recent years, the Holy Qur'an has been translated into almost every major language. Many of the classics in religious teachings have, also, been translated extensively. This has simplified the study of Islam by non-Arabs. It makes the actual study and mastery of the Arabic language only necessary for the scholar.

Many Muslims converts from around the world change their names, or tack on an Arabic name to their given and family names. However, this is by no means a prerequisite to acceptance by the Muslim community. There is no dishonor in being an American name. In fact, there are

many notable Muslims in the U.S. and abroad who feel intense family pride and will not change their names, for many it suffices that the name they carry was given to them by their mother and father and, thus, does not warrant changing. These are valid and acceptable positions. Many people who adopt a complete or partial Arabic name do so out of a feeling of rebirth in Islam, or because of the meanings imparted by the name, such as "Abdullah" (meaning the slave of God). Whatever the name, it is purely an individual matter, and "John Smith" is just as respectable and sufficient as "Abdullah."

Despite Arabic being the language of the Holy Qur'an and the daily prayers, there is no push for Muslims of any nationality to emulate an Arab, either in dress, manner, or any other fashion. There is no need to study Arab history or adopt any Arab customs in order to become or be accepted as a Muslim. One can be totally American and be totally a Muslim. There is no contradiction and no conflict of interest between the two.

A door, is designed to allow access to and from a structure, but it is also designed for physical security and integrity. Locks and bolts prevent unauthorized access and control a protected environment within. Doors can be sealed in order to protect valuable contents, to permit regulation of internal temperature and climate for specific purposes, or, in the case of jails and prisons, to protect the society outside from the unsocial element within. Physical security is respected only to the extent to which it is effective. In order for the integrity of the security system to be maintained, constant effort and vigilance are necessary. Untended locks or other access controls are worthless.

Any system, either spiritual or temporal, must have

built-in safeguards in order to protect values. The intensity and sophistication of the safeguards applied are generally in direct proportion to values being protected. These safeguards may be in terms of physical security, as with the door, or in terms of social, political, or moral constraints which determine the standards for membership and help to insure the perpetuation of the system.

Depending on the religious system in question, control of membership may or may not be important, depending on the expressed universality of the beliefs. However, in any religious system, the integrity of the message is of prime importance. The finest moral teachings can become exposed to the elements, due to a lack of proper safeguards, and loose credibility. When a creed ceases to "make sense," the devotees may cling to arguments which belittle the role of logic. The majority of such creeds may be inevitably supported through the "faith" of the members, regardless of present inconsistencies or past human changes in direction and message.

Time and human involvement are two major contributing factors to the decline in purity of any teaching. When proper safeguards are not applied, verbal tradition and cumulative reinterpretations, over time, will dilute and distort the original working and meaning. To find contemporary proof of this, one need only look to the perceived circumstances surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy. From 1964 until 1979, U.S. government was still investigating and trying to separate rumor from fact in this case, trying to arrive at a conclusion which would be satisfactory both legally and to the American public. Much of the events were colored by a nation-wide feeling that linked the C.I.A., organized crime, Fidel Castro, Russian espionage, etc., with the President's death. Even yet, many

are dissatisfied with the official explanations

Compared with the time periods involved in the writing down of the world's major religious scriptures, the assassination of President Kennedy is a very recent event. Furthermore, this assassination occurred at a point in time when communication and forensic science were highly advanced. However, at the time of the writing of any of the great religious scriptures, communication from city to city was poor and illiteracy common. People could be easily impressed by public heroes and spectacular events. Superstition, exaggeration, local coloring, etc., all added to legends, detracting from their credibility. Modern scholars have evolved techniques of literary and form criticism which can help in the sifting of these accounts, but there is a lack of reliable sources, and there are huge gaps in the chains of transmission

For example, the major Hindu religious texts are the Vedas, the Bagavat Gita, and the Upanishads (to name a few). These texts were each committed to writing after thousands of years of oral tradition. The Jewish Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses, have been traced to the period of the Kings of Israel, centuries after the death of the Prophet Moses. The earliest of the Christian Gospels has been dated, by many Christian theologians, as having been written about 70 years after the death of Jesus. In each case, oral tradition, lack of an autograph (original) text, successive rewritings, translations, and reinterpretations have made the job of deciphering difficult, if not impossible. Thus, entire religious systems have evolved by each successive generation building, not upon a true autograph text, but upon previous interpretations.

The Holy Qur'an was immediately committed to writing

and memory, not by one, but by several witnesses. The original language of the revelation was permanently recorded and has not been allowed to be altered or edited since. Interpretation and commentary are, of course, encouraged, but the original words of the text cannot be altered. One can read a copy of the Holy Qur'an printed on a modern press and compare it with a centuries old museum manuscript and find no discrepancy between the two texts. This sort of quality control is vital if the integrity of the original message is to be maintained.

Christianity can look to its own history for evidence of human alteration. For example, during the Council of Nicene (A.D. 325) the participants decided what was to be included in, and omitted from, the OFFICIAL Bible. The final text was edited and groomed to fit prevailing theology. Perceived contradictions and inconsistencies were omitted and the final edition received the seal of approval.

Islam is not free of conflicting interpretations, but the crucial difference between Islamic and Christian experiences is that no matter how extreme the viewpoint, no individual or community has dared to alter the text of the received Scripture. Whatever differences occur within Islam are based upon information, or misinformation, gleaned from the original wording of the Holy Qur'an. If changes were to be allowed, today's interpretation would become tomorrow's straight jacket. Meanings unthought of today could be lost to the future by the addition or omission of a single word. The universality of the message would be jeopardized. Eventually, the entire message would be obsolete, not because it was originally in error, but because of purposeful intervention in its true and exact transmission.

There is no real need for a door to do anything more than to allow easy access or egress to and from a structure, or to provide physical security for the goodies within. However, in the days before prefabrication, a doorway could be a thing of pride. The gilt and grandeur of palaces, mosques, cathedrals, temples, etc., were intended to make an impression upon all those who entered and departed. Modern doors tend to be square and artificial, made of pressed sawdust and glue. It is difficult to find a door with some distinction.

Think of such a door as opening into the very presence of God. What a magnificent idea. Stop and think, each person has just such a door. Shouldn't these doors be of such a scale and style as to reflect the glory onto which it opens? Should individuals be content with a plain, prefabricated door, built in a factory which produces exact copies?

Islam accepts that human beings all have unique doors, magnificently designed by God, to bring them into His presence. There is no mystery in the relationship between man and his Creator and no need for a mediator to provide some mystical key or to commune for any other human being. Each person has the power to open his or her door and has the right to approach God for help in his daily life. Through a regular routine of prayer, fasting, charity, reaffirmation of a basic commitment to the Creator, and through the fulfillment of the lifetime dream of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca (the birthplace of Muhammad and the revelation of Islam), these spiritual doors become splendid and worthy portals. Relying upon our own ability to grow and develop, and as responsible human beings, to answer for ourselves, are marks of true independence among men and true subservience to our God. It is important to note that of the 99 names given to God in the Holy

Qur'an, only one of them denotes an attribute which should frighten a true believer.

Islam is the message of peace. The very meaning of the word denotes peace—the peace which can come only from total surrender to God. From the same root word comes the word “Muslim”: one who surrenders to God. Thus, from these literal beginnings, each Muslim greets another with the expression, “*Assalamo Alaikum*”: upon you be peace. This peace only becomes complete internally when one recognizes, accepts, and exercises his own, unique door into His presence. It is the very existence of these doors which guarantees the individuality and freedom of man.

The cardinal doctrine of Islam is that of Unity. God is one; man is one. Muslims at prayer are secure in the knowledge that, around the world, millions of Muslims are doing likewise, forming a human chain, continuous and strong. Even though separated by hundreds of miles from the nearest Muslim, prayers are always closed by turning to both sides and extending blessings for peace to all unseen companions in prayer around the world. In this way, there is truly one humanity, one body with a common goal, i.e., that of nearness to God. In the Mosque, there are no partitions or separate areas to segregate the rich from the poor or to allow the elite in a society to remain aloof. The king must touch shoulder to his basest subject. When a Muslim fasts, he is feeling the same hunger and thirst that each Brother and Sister is feeling (the same pains that the less fortunate endure daily); thus, it is an important part of Islam to be charitable and give of our substance to provide for those less fortunate than ourselves. When a Muslim performs the pilgrimage to Mecca, he dons a simple seamless white garment, making him equal to every other

pilgrim; then he observes the same rituals and prayers, instilling a complimentary inward unity.

An intrinsic part of this total unity is a basic acceptance of Divine communication with mankind. An understatement on the surface, this entails an acceptance of the fact that God has participated in history and lives of all peoples. No one race or ethnic group can claim a monopoly on Divine communication.

As man has evolved social and political structures and broadened his awareness of the world around him, so has the scope of revelation granted to men been broadened. When the world was safely divided into separate islands of humanity, seeking minimal communication with other groups of humans, revelation was localized and restricted to a problem solving character. Once man began to communicate more freely and seek to expand his horizons to a global scale, revelation kept the pace.

In man's earliest stages of religious awareness, as individuals gradually recognized the existence of their own doorways into the presence of God, no one viewer could see the other's door. No one viewer could ever recognize the commonality of view. With this restriction in perception, prophecy (i.e., when God opens an individual's door from within) and prophets were all specialized and localized in order to deal with a given set of problems confronting a specific culture in a given place and time. In short, prophets were part of a specific society, and no society has been without a prophetic tradition. Each society and religious system has been comfortable and secure in the "knowledge" that their unique chain of revelation represented the only true contact with the Creator. Mankind is becoming increasingly aware of similarities

between "our" religious tradition and "their's," and rather than recognize the common source of revelation (e.g., the unity of God), it has been simpler to attribute similarities to plagiarism. This is almost an anthropological approach to religion, concentrating on assessment without being concerned with the existence and participation in human affairs of Divine Being).

From the outset, the Holy Prophet Muhammad professed a universal mission. Islam's message was in no way "borrowed" from any previous tradition; rather, it assimilated them, drawing their common thread of revelation into a close-knit unity, completing the tie that had been the aim of all revelations since Adam. Once this tie was accomplished, the pattern of all previous traditions became manifested and the mould was set for all future communications between God and men. Islam culminated all previous localized communications and broadened the scale to accommodate a world community. The Holy Qur'an was the final perfection of religious scriptures, and its pages have withstood the tests of time and interpretation to find renewed meaning in each new generation. Through Islam, mankind has become a single entity. Thus, our God has never really changed, only our perception of Him.

For several thousand years, mankind has been developing from small, scattered, isolated communities into a modern, interrelated global community. Jet travel and space age technology have brought the farthest corners of our world together through rapid transit and improved communication. It is becoming increasingly imperative that societies cease to consider themselves as separate islands of humanity. Isolation and segregation are no longer viable ideologies. As citizens of this new global community,

everyone must accept and deal with the fact that contacts have broadened. There is no longer a need to seek security in small communities which pride themselves in "sameness" and look down on those who are different. On the contrary, such an attitude is, of itself, a grave threat to our security in today's environment. Centuries of propaganda, which evolved for the purpose of keeping unlike elements apart, must be discarded if we are to continue to exist on this planet.

The world population is approaching mammoth proportions; food supplies and other essential resources are becoming stretched to their limit. A perpetuation of the animal instinct for lone survival forces cut-throat competition for space, food, and natural resources. Technology has provided weapon systems which daily increase the potential scale and force of violence. Without a change in attitude, global conflagration is inevitable. That this change in attitude must come about through religion and moral thinking is Islam's message to modern man, the current message of peace.

The Holy Qur'an states that God chooses those whom He would have serve as prophets. The gift (and responsibility) of prophecy is not sought; rather, throughout human history, prophets have been groomed for their calling. When God chooses, and the individual has been sufficiently prepared, God opens that individual's door and begins two-way communication. That God has opened many such doors throughout history is universally accepted by religious people. History has demonstrated that man has traditionally been skeptical of such two-way communication and prophets have generally been persecuted by those elements of society which were unprepared to accept their

mission. But, throughout religious history, God has protected His prophets and helped them to overcome violent oppositions and establish His ordinances.

In almost every case, the success of a particular prophet could more easily be seen in the second and successive generations of believers than in his own lifetime. However, the most "successful" prophet during his own lifetime was the Holy Prophet of Islam. In general, a prophet did not live to see the wide-spread institution of his teachings, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad lived to see (and administer) a theocratic government and a whole nation form around the belief in One God. His immediate successors (or Caliphs) spread the message of Islam over three continents and laid the foundation for an entire civilization to be built upon the teachings of Islam.

This rapid expansion of Islam, both during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and during the reign of his Caliphs, has often been inaccurately depicted, taken out of context, by Western sources. It has often been said that Islam was spread by the sword. Nothing could be further from the truth. Islam, after all, is the message of peace. To revert to the sword for anything short of self-defense is in direct contradiction to the very essence of Islam. But even the right of self-defense was not immediately granted to the early Muslim community.

The Prophet Muhammad and his companions withstood cruel bloody attacks, both verbal and physical. The Holy Prophet's own tribe plotted with neighboring tribes to assassinate him. Muslims were stoned in the streets and were tortured and executed for their beliefs—but there was no permission to strike back. Only after many years of oppression, the revelation was received granting the

Muslims the right of self-defence. Several battles were fought between the Muslims and the pagan Meccan army. In war, as in peace, the standards set by the Holy Prophet were high, allowing no unnecessary shedding of blood or pillage. When the Muslim forces finally entered Mecca it was a bloodless coup, despite the fact that the pagan army had mobilized for battle, and the Muslim conquerers were refrained from any sort of violence against their one-time persecutors.

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, during the reign of the Caliphs, it was a time of empires. Europe, Asia, and Africa were in a constant state of upheaval, shifting from one power center to another with the rise and fall of dynasties. The building of the Islamic Empire was a temporal move, in keeping with the conditions that prevailed. However, the early Caliphs (before the title became hereditary) were chosen as religious leaders, not as generals. These "Commanders of the Faithful" insured the continual intertwining of Islamic Law and temporal government, and a unique system of government and economics evolved. In this new system, non-Muslim scholars found a new freedom of expression not experienced under previous pagan and Christian rulers. Many of the great advances in learning which were attributable to the Islamic Empire can be traced to Jewish scholars who flourished in their new environment—a tribute to the degree of religious tolerance taught by the Prophet of Islam and practiced by the early Muslims. Yet, Islam has been repeatedly branded as intolerant.

On the other hand, during the Crusades, it has been said that more Jews were killed by Europe's Christian knights on their way to and from the Holy Land than were Muslims in actual battle. One need only to recall the pro-

grams in Russia and the concentration camps of Nazi Germany to see more proof of religious intolerance. The Spanish Inquisition forced exile or execution on all Muslims, Jews, and heretics. In the New World hundreds of thousands of native Indians and Hawaiians died during or despite conversion to Christianity. This less than gentle record of events dwarfs any fabricated charges ever leveled against Islam.

Those people who have been chosen for the special role as a prophet are worthy of respect. The Holy Qur'an instructs that all prophets of God are to be respected, no matter their country of origin and that because of their unique grooming and special relationship with God, there can be no better example to follow. Yet, little is known about most prophets. In many cases, the information available is so sketchy that only a few years of the prophet's life are accessible for reference. At most, there are bits and pieces of biographical importance, but little which depicts their day-to-day lifestyles and the decisions they were forced to make as humans under stress.

Therefore, those people who knew and lived with the Holy Prophet Muhammad were careful to record every detail that they could concerning his life. As a result, there are basically two bodies of contemporary information concerning his life: the Hadith and Sunna. The Hadith are a collection of accounts passed down through carefully recorded chains of transmission. These accounts encompass all facets of the everyday life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Sunna are his recorded teachings and guidance which was passed on to those around him. These two bodies of information, coupled with the Holy Qur'an (being the revealed message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad) form the basis of Islamic Law.

CURRENT TOPICS AND TRENDS:

**RESEARCH ON THE SHROUD
OF TURIN UPDATED**

Previous issues of **The Muslim Sunrise** have carried reports of the impressive research being done on the famous Shroud of Turin. Evidence continuously mounting over the last several years indicates that the bloody imprints of the face and body of a man on this faded yellow burial cloth could be those of Jesus.

The Shroud has been kept in a chapel attached to the Cathedral of St. John in Turin, Italy. In 1978, a team of 36 scientists subjected it to detailed scrutiny. They came to the conclusion that the imprint could not have been faked.

Now, *The New York Times* (June 30, 1980) reports that a Roman Catholic theology professor has revealed that "he had found additional evidence suggesting that the Shroud of Turin was the burial cloth of Jesus. Reverend Francis L. Filas bases his conclusions on the fact that 'markings that appear in photographs of the Shroud are extremely similar to those on a coin issued during the regime of Pontius Pilate between the years 29 and 32 A.D.' Rev. Filas mentions that 'Pilate was the Roman procurator of Judea who presided over the trial in which Jesus was sentenced to death by Crucifixion sometime around the year 33 A.D.'

Father Filas, a Jesuit who teaches theology at Loyola University, explains that 'the markings over the right eye of the "Man of the Shroud" fit the supposition that a coin had been placed on the eyes of the dead man to keep them closed' and that these markings resemble an astrologer's staff and four Greek characters used on Pilate's coins.

The significance of these findings can hardly be over-emphasized. Once, the authenticity of the Shroud is established, the Christian world will have to come inevitably to one further conclusion—that the blood markings on the Shroud are not of a dead Jesus but of the one who was only unconscious and living when he was taken off the Cross and wrapped in this historic cloth.





